

Scranton



Tribune.

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TWO CENTS.

LAST DAYS OF CONGRESS

The Record of the 56th Session Is Now Practically Completed. An Eventful Gathering.

WORK ACCOMPLISHED

While Lacking the Thrill of Excitement Incident to the Period of the War with Spain, It Has Inherited Much of the Work of Reconstruction and Has Been Obliged to Arrange the Expense Made Necessary by the War—The Question of Dealing with Our New Insular Possessions One of the Most Puzzling. Terms of Government Desired—The Army Reorganization.

By Exclusive Wire from The Associated Press.

Washington, Feb. 24.—The record of the Fifty-sixth congress is now practically completed and although a few important measures are still in the balance it is possible to take a survey of the wide range of legislation considered and enacted within the two sessions comprising the congress now drawing to a close. It has been an eventful congress in many respects, and although lacking the thrill and excitement incident to the period of the war with Spain, yet it inherited much of the work of reconstruction and expense made necessary by the events of that war. Chief among the important measures growing out of the war has been the attitude of the government toward our new insular possessions. While this question is still open to some extent, yet the present congress has passed upon one of its most important phases by enacting a law for a complete form of government for Porto Rico, legislative, executive and judicial, together with a comprehensive plan of raising revenues for the island. The status of the Philippines has been an unfurling source of debate in both branches of congress, particularly in the senate. Resolutions of criticism and inquiry have been discussed at much length but with little tangible result. At the first session Senator Sweeney proposed a brief measure confirming the president's authority to shape the affairs of the island until congress had passed finally upon questions relating to their political status. This resolution in its amended form has been granted upon the army appropriation bill, although it is yet to be determined whether this provision will be accepted by either of both houses. Cuban legislation has been in abeyance pending the action of the constitutional convention of Cuba in framing the constitution of the island. Another important achievement in insular legislation is that of enacting a law giving Hawaii a complete form of territorial government with an insular legislature and judiciary, a governor, chosen from Hawaii and a delegate in the house of representatives. This law passed at the first session, has become so far effective that the second session saw the appearance of the delegate from Hawaii, Mr. Wilcox, who is the first official representative of the island possessions of the United States. A Porto Rico commissioner, Mr. Degan, also has been accredited to Washington under the law passed at the first session.

Work Accomplished.

In actual work accomplished the fifty-sixth congress has an exceptionally large record. Aside from the Porto Rican and Hawaiian acts already mentioned, this congress has passed a financial law establishing a permanent gold reserve of about \$150,000,000, fixing the ratio between gold and silver and reorganizing the bonding and banking systems of the treasury; reorganizing the United States army on a basis of 200,000 men; re-apportioning the representation in congress on the basis of the twentieth census; providing for government participation in the Louisiana purchase expedition in 1863, as well as many other measures of wide general importance. But the congress draws to a close without some of the most important measures having been taken, and quite likely to expire without final action, including the Nicaragua canal bill, the shipping subsidy bill, the Pacific cable bill and the electromaritime bill. The fate of some of these measures is very much in doubt, but at this late date in the session the chances are decidedly against them.

The appropriations of the present congress were on an unusually large figure, amounting for the two sessions approximately \$1,657,369,457. This is about \$10,000,000 less than the aggregate appropriations of the preceding congress, which, however, covered the period of the Spanish war when the appropriations can in a single year up to \$892,323,615. The totals for the last two sessions of the present congress as recently summarized by Chairman Cannon, of the house committee on appropriations, is as follows:

Appropriations, first session, including sinking fund, \$710,559,862; appropriations, second session, including sinking fund, \$747,118,595.

The Army Bill.

The act reorganizing the army and placing the military establishment on a permanent basis probably is the most important piece of general legislation enacted during the present session and one of the most important measures placed on the statute books in recent years.

The house passed the bill before the holidays, but there was considerable delay in the senate and it was not until Feb. 2 that the measure became effective as law.

As finally enacted it provides a

standing army to consist of fifteen regiments of cavalry, a corps of artillery, thirty regiments of infantry, one Cavalry, six regiments of marine corps, thirteen brigadier generals and the usual staff corps. The old regimental organization of the artillery is discontinued. Authority is given the president to enlist natives of the Philippines when necessity requires, not to exceed 12,000 men. A provisional regiment of Porto Ricans also is provided. A feature of the act which caused much controversy is the prohibition of the sale of beer, wine or any intoxicating liquors in any post, exchange or canteen, transport, or other military property of the United States.

The financial legislation of the congress has been of unusual importance and has placed on the statute books the law establishing the gold standard, providing for the redemption and reissue of the interest bearing bonded obligation of the United States, establishing a permanent gold reserve of \$150,000,000, regulating national banks, and making numerous provisions regarding circulation and banking circulation. This legislation was drafted by leaders of both houses prior to the meeting of congress and became a cause measure. After its passage some question arose as to the maintenance of the purity of the metals under the terms of the bill. At the present session bills to rectify this feature have been reported, specifically requiring the exchange of gold for standard silver dollars. No action has been taken on them, however.

Revenue Bill.

The revenue legislation of the congress has been confined to an effort to reduce the taxation imposed when the war with Spain began. This revenue reduction measure is still in controversy between the two houses, the conference committee not having reached an agreement.

The electromaritime bill was passed by the house early in the present session. Its chief feature is that placing a tax of ten cents per pound on oats, when colored in imitation of button, the stated purpose being to prevent alleged fraudulent practices in placing this article on the market. The bill has met sharp opposition in the senate, and in the closing days of the session its passage is still in doubt.

Quite a number of other measures of general legislation, more or less important, will expire with the end of the congress, after having secured a certain degree of consideration and success in one branch or the other.

PAYING OFF THE SCHOOL DISTRICTS

State Authorities Pave the Way for the Proposed Bill to Make Up Deficiency.

By Exclusive Wire from The Associated Press.

Harrisburg, Feb. 24.—The state authorities are paving the way for their proposed bill to make up the \$1,000,000 deficiency in the school appropriation caused by Governor Stone's veto of paying off the districts earlier than usual.

Every district in the state has been paid with the exception of Swissvale, Allegheny county, whose bond is withheld because of the neglect of the school board to file its annual report in the public instruction department. The bill has been prepared by Attorney General Elkin and will probably be introduced in the house by ex-State Treasurer Bertram, as soon as the supreme court hands down an opinion in the Center county case, in which Judge Love sustains Stone's veto. When the case is argued at Philadelphia on March 11, Attorney General Elkin is expected to request Chief Justice McCullough to decide the case promptly so that the bill may be presented in time to be acted upon by the present legislature. The appropriation became available the first Monday of June and the distribution did not begin until September.

All of the districts have been paid on the basis of \$5,000,000 with the exception of the fifty which brought suit to recover their full share.

The proposed bill of the basis of one-half million and which have been paid in excess of the amount demanded by them.

Six mandamus suits are now pending in the Dauphin county court and it is expected that Elkin will allow judgment to be taken by default, knowing that the court will not give an injunction as to the legality of Governor Stone's veto while the question is pending in the supreme court. Two of the suits are from Montgomery county; one was brought by the school district of Elizabethville, and the other by the district of Granville, Bradford county. The others were brought Saturday and were instituted by the school authorities of Latrobe and Limestone.

MISERY AT THURMOND.

Business Portion of the Town Wiped Out by Fire.

By Exclusive Wire from The Associated Press.

Montgomery, Va., Feb. 24.—The business portion of Thurmond, which originated in the Hotel Thompson, a number of tragic cases near the hotel occurred. The loss total about \$200,000.

The buildings destroyed were the Hotel Thompson, Wm. W. Clark's drug store, McElroy's hardware store, Lopez's dry goods store and the postoffice.

Fighting the Book Publishers.

By Exclusive Wire from The Associated Press.

Midland, N. Y., Feb. 24.—The Brookwood of Midland, publisher of the "Bookman," the organ of a Chicago publishing house, has threatened books on the Erie railroad engineers.

The chairman of the grievance committee is authorized to proceed to Chicago to secure the legal talents. The monthly pay of many engineers has been increased at Pier Jervis by the publishers of books alleged to have been ordered two years ago.

Mitchell's Fourth Term.

By Exclusive Wire from The Associated Press.

Salem, Ore., Feb. 24.—John H. Mitchell, for the fourth time was elected United States senator from Oregon at 12:30 p. m. today on the 60th ballot of the session. His election was brought about by a combination of Republicans and Democrats.

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ARMY BILL TO BE CONSIDERED

The Measure Will Be Debated in the Senate During the Present Week.

NO HOPE FOR CANAL BILL

Probabilities Are Against Its Being Reached—A Large Number of Private Bills Will Be Passed, but Little Legislation of General Interest Will Be Accomplished—Acts Signed by the President—House Will Be Occupied with Conference Reports on Appropriation Bills.

By Exclusive Wire from The Associated Press.

Washington, Feb. 24.—The army appropriation bill will receive the attention of the senate during the early part of the present week, and when it is disposed of, another appropriation bill will be taken up. It is probable that the army bill will be debated at length, and the amendment relating to Cuba, if the latter is introduced, as is proposed. Those amendments, or either of them, quite certainly will be made the basis of a number of speeches, as they will serve to open up the entire question of the relations of the United States to the islands which this country came into control of through the war with Spain. It is hoped that the sundry civil bill will be reported by the time the army bill is disposed of, so that it may be taken up next, and if it is not in shape to come up at that time the river and harbor bill will claim attention.

The general deficiency bill is likely to be the last of the appropriation bills acted on.

Conference reports will be made from time to time during the week. Some of these will evince considerable discussion. The conference on the war revenue reduction bill expect to make their report during the week.

On the appropriation bills, only two, the pension and the urgent deficiency bill, have been signed by the president. Both houses have passed the legislative, Indiana, District of Columbia, naval, marine, commissary, ordnance, post office and diplomatic bills, and they are in varying stages of consideration. The army bill and the river and harbor, sundry civil and general deficiency bills still remain entirely unacted upon by the senate.

It is not believed that much general legislation will be accomplished during the week, but a great many private bills will be passed. The probabilities are all against getting up the Near-east canal bill.

The senate will continue at 11 o'clock each day and probably sit every night in the House.

The last week of this congress in the house will be mainly occupied with conference reports on the appropriation bills and other numerous measures now being fought over by the managers of the two houses. The last of the general appropriation bills went to the senate on Thursday and the house has its debts pretty well cleared for the final struggle with the senate. Some of the contests probably will be exceedingly fierce, but when it comes down to actual work the house, although a large and undisciplined body, ordinarily can dispose of business under its rules with much greater celerity than the senate.

"Consent in any form, even if only in tact to allow the present anthracite agreement to continue, thus opening the way for the miners to correct varying local conditions, presents a close to the matter with all its complications. In a conference the miners have little to gain save recognition of their miners and governors.

"Miners of the bituminous fields are naturally vastly interested in the outcome of the proposed wage conference in the anthracite fields. After discussing the matter with a number of representative miners of the Pittsburgh district the consensus of opinion would seem to be that just as the bituminous miners have been granted their wage scale under their own laws, barring local complications, the anthracite wage situation might be settled on the same basis.

For the betterment of the condition of the anthracite miner the organization of the miners has already taken steps to secure legislation in Pennsylvania. They are asking state laws for the payment by the ton instead of mine car, the establishment of checkweighmen and other desirable provisions. For these taxes all of the miners of Pennsylvania and of other districts will co-operate. The Indiana miners convention of miners went on record as opposed to a demand for a ten cent advance for the anthracite districts, and every move of that convention in relation to the anthracite fields was for conservative action."

The convention directed the officers of the anthracite districts to block a custom of operators to buy up large stocks of coal by offering a certain amount for each car of the coal of the entire organization of the entire state.

"With a satisfactory scale settled the anthracite fields would hardly justify the existence of the entire organization of Pennsylvania in the entire state.

"Such action would be a violation of the inter-state coal agreements, to which the miners will not consent.

This and next month are the periods of district wage settlements for the miners.

Beyond these and a few small bills of local importance no effort will be made to put through any new bills.

The leaders know that it would be a waste of time to send any further general legislation to this senate at this stage of this session and their efforts will be directed to clearing up matters in dispute between the two houses, it probably will be necessary to hold a night session during the latter part of the week, and both houses will go next Sunday to continue the legislative day of Saturday, which expires at noon, March 5.

MISERY AT POUILLES.

At a Short Distance from Rome the People Are Restless—Economic Kitchen Feeds the Starving.

COAL TRADE REVIEW.

By Exclusive Wire from The Associated Press.

Philadelphia, Feb. 24.—The ledger in its coal article lameness, \$30,000. The cold weather continues to add to anthracite coal at the same time it restricts both the capital and movement of coal. The eastern production is being held up by the numerous meetings of the large operators to discuss the future marketings of coal.

The cabinet, however, hopes to maintain order without force and to avoid further trouble by the use of kind words.

A policy for the proposed joint conference with anthracite operators will be outlined at a conference of the anthracite miners and the national officials called to take place at Hazelton on March 7.

W. D. Ryan, secretary-treasurer of the Illinois miners, said recently, in relation to the anthracite situation:

"With a satisfactory scale settled for the bituminous fields, a little in the anthracite fields would hardly justify the existence of the entire organization of Pennsylvania.

"Such action would be a violation of the inter-state coal agreements, to which the miners will not consent.

"It is this for you to recover yourself before the devil, your master, makes a clean sweep with you into hell."

This and next month are the periods of district wage settlements for the miners.

Fire Consumes \$75,000.

By Exclusive Wire from The Associated Press.

Utica, N. Y., Feb. 24.—Fire started in the dining room of the Utica pavilion hotel, located on the corner of State and Clinton streets, about 12:30 p. m. The pavilion is owned by the Utica pavilion company, located at Binghamton and Thirty-fourth streets. The roof was partially destroyed and the interior was gutted.

"We now propose that Mrs. Nathan is held longer to raise the greatest army of women the world has ever known and who will run out of existence. It is our intention to begin with you."

Immigrant Deported.

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MR. FARR TO BE CONTROLLER.

Has Been Promised Appointment According to Harrisburg Despatch.

By Exclusive Wire from The Associated Press.

Harrisburg, Feb. 24.—Governor Stone has asked Attorney General Elkin for an opinion as to whether he has the authority under the act of 1895 to appoint controllers for the counties of Berks, Lancaster, Lackawanna and Westmoreland. Each of these counties has a population of over 150,000, according to the last census, and Mr. Elkin advises Stone that he is without authority to appoint the machine will attempt to secure the passage of the enabling act giving the governor this right. Such an act was introduced in the senate recently by Mr. Heidenbach of Lancaster, and will be held in committee until Elkin gives his decision.

County Chairman George W. Billman of Reading, chief clerk in the insurance department, will be appointed controller of Berks county. County Chairman Alfonso of Reading was nominated and elected by the Democrats last November, and he will be appointed controller of Lancaster.

A. H. Harmer will be the Lancaster appointee; ex-Senator Fair has been promised the appointment for Lackawanna. Ex-Senator Brown wants to be controller of Westmoreland. The machine leaders there have endorsed John H. Blumman, and it is thought he will be appointed.

By Exclusive Wire from The Associated Press.

Washington, Feb. 24.—The army appropriation bill will receive the attention of the senate during the present week.

ANOTHER COAL STRIKE IS NOT TO BE FEARED.

The United Mine Workers of America Are Standing on a Conservative Platform.

By Exclusive Wire from The Associated Press.

Pittsburgh, Feb. 24.—The Commercial Gazette says tomorrow will say:

"While the